

President Clinton signed the FY2001 National Defense Authorization Act on October 30, 2000, which brings many new initiatives to the TRICARE program including two dramatic improvements for Medicare-eligible uniformed services retirees, their spouses and survivors who are age 65 and over.

Effective April 1, 2001, eligible beneficiaries will receive pharmacy benefits to include access to military treatment facility pharmacies, the National Mail Order Pharmacy program and retail pharmacies.

Effective October 1, 2001, eligible beneficiaries who continue to receive care from their current Medicare providers, will have TRICARE become second payer to Medicare. This means that TRICARE will pay out-of-pocket costs for services covered under Medicare, plus these beneficiaries will be eligible for TRICARE benefits not covered by Medicare.

For the Pharmacy Benefit:

- o If you are currently age 65 or older or will be 65 before April 1, 2001, you will be eligible to use the retail and mail order pharmacy benefit without being enrolled in Medicare Part B.
- o If you turn 65 on or after April 1, 2001, you will need to be enrolled in Medicare Part B in order to use the retail and mail order pharmacy benefit.

For the Medical Care (TRICARE as Second Payer) Benefit:

- o You must be eligible for Medicare Part A and enrolled in Medicare Part B to participate in the health program.

What Do You Need to Do Now?

- o Update your Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) record with your correct address and any changes in family status such as marriage, divorce, birth or adoption. Home addresses are important because the address on file with DEERS is used to send out information on health benefits. Note: Health benefits could be denied if DEERS is not updated to reflect a new spouse or child.

Retirees (and active duty members) may update DEERS by:

- o Going to the nearest military personnel office
- o E-mailing changes to addrinfo@osd.pentagon.mil
- o Mailing changes to:

DEERS Support Office
ATTN: COA
400 Gigling Road
Seaside, CA 93955-6771

- o Calling the toll-free numbers for the DEERS Support Office, 1-800-334-4162 (California only), 1-800-527-5602 (Alaska and Hawaii), and 1-800-538-9552 for the rest of the United States;

- o For the latest information on how to update your information in DEERS, visit www.tricare.osd.mil/DEERSAddress/

Update your DEERS record to reflect your Medicare Part B enrollment status.

If you are eligible, enroll in Medicare Part B if you haven't already. If you are not sure if you are enrolled, check the back of your Social Security card for this information.

To enroll:

Submit an application to enroll in Medicare Part B directly to the Social Security Administration.

Note: the General Enrollment Period for enrollment in Medicare Part B is held January 1 through March 31 of each year, and Part B coverage starts on July 1 of that year. See the Medicare Web site www.medicare.gov for details on enrollment in Part B.

Important note: Eligible seniors should not immediately cancel their current Medigap insurance coverage. The Department of Defense (DoD) is working with the Health Care Financing Administration, the organization that administers the Medicare benefit, to provide the most accurate information on the appropriateness of continued enrollment in Medigap insurance policies.

Other New Initiatives Coming Soon. Following are a few of the initiatives that were also included in the new law. Look for more updates/details coming soon to the Military Health System/TRICARE Website (<http://www.tricare.osd.mil>).

- o TRICARE Prime Remote for Families
- o Elimination of Co-pays for Active Duty Family Members
- o Catastrophic Cap Reduction
- p Chiropractic Health Care for Active Duty
- o Custodial Care Benefit